

(Washington, DC)—The entire Wisconsin Congressional delegation expressed disappointment today with the decision by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to deny a waiver extending SeniorCare, effectively ending this popular, successful prescription drug program for seniors in Wisconsin. “We regret this decision by HHS to deny the state’s request to extend SeniorCare. As a delegation, we were united in our support for this program and regret that Secretary Leavitt did not agree that its benefits to patients and cost-savings to the federal government are worth keeping,” said Sens. Feingold and Kohl and Reps. Obey, Baldwin, Kagen, Moore, Kind, Petri, Ryan, and Sensenbrenner.

When the federal Medicare Part D plan went into effect in January 2006, SeniorCare was granted a waiver to continue until June 2007. Last July, the entire delegation sent a letter supporting the request to extend the program to DHHS Secretary Michael Leavitt. The entire delegation sent another letter in support of SeniorCare in March of this year.

“Given SeniorCare’s tremendous benefits to Wisconsin’s elderly and the reduced costs to the taxpayers, this overwhelmingly successful program clearly deserved to be extended,” Congresswoman Moore said. “Instead, the Administration has turned its back on Wisconsin’s seniors. I will continue to press the Administration to extend this program to provide the best possible prescription drug plan for Wisconsin’s seniors.” Rep. Moore said.

“This is a shortsighted decision by the Administration to kill a successful program that saves money and simplifies health care for seniors. During our Aging Committee hearing last week we provided plenty of evidence that SeniorCare offers superior prescription drug coverage to that of Medicare Part D, costs taxpayers less, and seniors in Wisconsin widely prefer to keep it,” said Kohl. “I am disappointed that the Administration chose to ignore the facts and the will of the people in Wisconsin.” Sen. Kohl said.

“The Administration’s denial of the SeniorCare waiver is unacceptable. Wisconsinites are well served by the SeniorCare program and it is wrong for the Administration to push its flawed prescription drug program at the expense of Wisconsin seniors and American taxpayers. I will continue to work with Governor Doyle and the Wisconsin Congressional delegation to ensure SeniorCare continues.” Sen. Feingold said.

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